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THE HEDONISTIC IMPERATIVE: THE SEDUCTION OF HYPERCAPITALISM

BIOPOLITICS,
MASHINES

BAUDRILLARD, DELEUZE/GUATTARI, DESIRE, RETENTION, SIMULATION, STIEGLER, STUPIDITY,
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The unlikely parable that Xenophon relates between Socrates and their mutual friend Aristippus of Cyrene serves as a lead in to the subject of this post. Socrates had observed his friend Aristippus for some time and felt that the young man needed a little guidance. He remonstrated Aristippus for his excessive enjoyment in food, wine, women, and pleasures of the body. For Aristippus each moment should be lived to the fullest, brining intensity to each and every sensual movement of the mind and body, pushing at the limits of pleasure and disgust. Socrates for his part believed that virtue and frugality, limiting one's mental and physical life to a hygienic regimen of work, thought, and play.

In our own world this battle between – ever since Max Weber and his classic *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* – the modest, frugal, work ethic of a hygienic lifestyle and the excess of the Rock-n-Roll drug laden hedonistic world of sex and pleasure has pitted certain philosophical and political agendas against each other. Such an attack on the spirit of capitalism would come from student of Freud and Marx, Herbert Marcuse during the 1960's. In the "Political Preface" that opens *Eros and Civilization* Marcuse expresses the optimistic view that the achievements of modern industrial society would make it possible to use society's resources to shape "man's world in accordance with the Life Instincts, in the concerted struggle against the purveyors of Death." He concluded the preface with the words, "*Today the fight for life, the fight for Eros, is the political fight.*"¹

Various critics of Marcuse's hedonist philosophy like Richard Posner would accuse him of wrongly believing that polymorphous perversity would help to create a utopia and that sex has the potential to be a politically subversive force. Posner in a later work suggested in *Public Intellectuals: A Story of Decline* (2001) that "1960s radicals", influenced by Marcuse, claimed that "sexual promiscuity would undermine capitalism" but have been proven wrong by the spread of both sexual promiscuity and capitalism.² Christophe Lasch in his *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* described the 1960's culture in pursuit of performativity as originating "not in the pursuit of pleasure but in a war of all against all, in which even the most intimate encounters become a form of mutual exploitation."³ He'd go on to say that that this form of capitalist desire seeking performance and competitive pleasure in work and play had led to it's opposite that this hedonism is a fraud; the pursuit of pleasure disguises a struggle for power. Americans have not really become more sociable and cooperative, as the theorists of

other-direction and conformity would like us to believe; they have merely become more adept at exploiting the conventions of interpersonal relations for their own benefit. Activities ostensibly undertaken purely for enjoyment often have the real object of doing others in. It is symptomatic of the underlying tenor of American life that vulgar terms for sexual intercourse also convey the sense of getting the better of someone, working him over, taking him in, imposing your will through guile, deception, or superior force. Verbs associated with sexual pleasure have acquired more than the usual overtones of violence and psychic exploitation. In the violent world of the ghetto, the language of which now pervades American society as a whole, the violence associated with sexual intercourse is directed with special intensity by men against women, specifically against their mothers. The language of ritualized aggression and abuse reminds those who use it that exploitation is the general rule and some form of dependence the common fate. (Lasch, 66-67)

Deleuze once remarked that "Western philosophy has always consisted of saying ... desire is desire for what one does not have; that begins with Plato, it continues with Lacan."⁴ This notion that human lack is central to our metaphysical needs is the Platonic equivalent of the great myth of Prometheus and his brother Epimetheus which I've explicated elsewhere as the archetypal story of human lack in search of a lost object of desire, etc. As an Anti-Platonist Deleuze felt this conception of the mobilization of desire towards an impossible object (or, as Lacan referred to it the object *petite a* – object cause of desire, etc.) is at the heart of an insidious view of life. Another recent thinker – Aaron Schuster in *The Trouble with Pleasure* – has argued instead "that Western philosophy has always been split between two paradigms of pleasure, the Platonic and the Aristotelian, and that the tradition's reflections on pleasure have consisted mostly in an elaboration and/or combination of these opposing views."⁵

Plato defines pleasure in a negative manner, as the relief from distress, the assuagement of suffering, or the satisfaction of desire; metaphysically, it takes the form of a movement that restores a state of equilibrium, often characterized in terms of the filling of a lack. "Whoever among us is emptied, it seems, desires the opposite of what he suffers. Being emptied, he desires to be filled" (Philebus 35a). According to this definition, pleasure has no intrinsic consistency or independent existence, but is inextricably bound to its opposite like two creatures fused at the head (Phaedo 60c): there is no gratification that is not predicated on some discontent, no satisfaction without the painful feeling of a void. (Schuster, 101-102)

For Plato pleasure was a process, not a stable state. He condemned those like Aristippus as dangerous, believing that this pursuit of pleasure in all things bodily would create an ever greater lack, in order to enjoy the continued movement of filling this void at the core of the human. Pleasure he believed is a remedial good that risks becoming harmful, following the logic of the *pharmakon**: just as a cure administered in the wrong dose turns into a poison, so pleasure, when not properly measured, becomes a destructive force.

Against this metaphysics of *lack* and the pursuit of pleasure (desire of desire: processual) is Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* where he would argue that Plato's negative definition fails to do justice to the richness of the phenomenon, leaving incomprehensible the intimate connection between pleasure and "our human nature" (NE 1172a19). In order to grasp pleasure in its positivity, a new conceptual framework is needed, and so Aristotle proceeds by turning around the central premises of Plato's account. Rather than equating pleasure with a cure for sickness, Aristotle describes it as an efflorescence of life; instead of grounding it in deficiency and disharmony, he views it as an abundance of vital "energy." (Schuster, 102)

Crucial to this shift against the philosophy of lack is the removal of pleasure from the categories of movement (kinesis) and becoming (genesis). Schuster describes Aristotle's program saying that as long as pleasure is thought according to such metaphysically subordinate terms, it can have only a very poor degree of reality: pleasure is less perfect than the balanced neutral condition, just as any process is inferior to the complete state toward which it tends. Aristotle grants pleasure an ontological dignity by rethinking it according to *energeia*, a category that escapes the Platonic opposition between movement and rest. *Energeia* is a neologism derived from the word *ergon*, or work, and is usually translated as activity or actuality; its fullest expression consists in activities that are complete (at rest) in themselves, i.e., those whose end does not lie in any external accomplishment, but in their own performance. "There is not only an activity of movement but an activity of immobility, and pleasure is found more in rest than in movement" (NE 1154b27–28). Whereas Plato gives eating and drinking as his main examples of pleasure, not only as processes that satisfy vital needs but as emblematic of the excesses of desire—the real source of evil in Plato is culinary perversity—Aristotle's primary examples are thinking and seeing, activities whose very exercise is endowed with pleasure. Instead of a restorative process, pleasure is conceived as a perfection of immanent activity. The natural condition, which for Plato designates an ideal state of balance or harmony, is understood by Aristotle as one of active flourishing: to be healthy means to be active, to do things, and pleasure is bound up with the living being's self-actualization. Pleasure is what completes the unimpeded exercise of a faculty, it supervenes like the "bloom in those who are vigorous" upon the free performance of an activity (NE 1174b33). Rather than defining pleasure in terms of becoming, Aristotle makes it a supplementary perfection of being. Far from being a mere escape from suffering, pleasure is a heightened state of health and vitality: it is pure as such, neither mixed with nor conditioned by pain. What sets life in motion according to Schuster's commentary on Aristotle "is not the desire to overcome a lack, but rather a manifold of activities—*energeiai*, positive "energies"—that enjoy being active and expanding the scope of their power. French psychologist Théodule Ribot's definition of pleasure as "a superior form of normal life, —an augmentation, an increase, an enhancement of the state of physical and mental health" confirms the Aristotelian view, and, closer to Deleuze and Guattari's interest in deviant currents of psychoanalysis, Alexander Lowen, a student of Wilhelm Reich, declares: "Pleasure is the creative force in life." (Schuster, 103)

This battle over desire as *lack* or *positivity* is at the core of much current philosophy (of which I will have much to say in future posts). Anyone who has read through the arcane and Derridean laden works of Bernard Stiegler will soon realize that he is of the school of Platonic negativity, lack, and pharmakon. As Schuster will remind us if life in the Aristotelian sense is an active flourishing, embellished and augmented by culture, in a disciplinary regime the encounter between the bodily drives and civilization necessarily involves violence, repression, sacrifice, and loss. The Aristotelian idea of culture lives on in the positive sense of discipline, as submission to an external regime which expands and perfects the body's capabilities, even to the point where these exceed any technical expertise. But this is not the primary meaning of culture in modernity, which instead manifests itself in discontent and libidinal misery—the testimony of the neurotic. Sometimes it is said that we are living in a postdisciplinary society, where social control is exerted not so much through prohibitions and symbolic authorities as through positive inducements to the libido and injunctions to enjoy. If anything, this idea of a "society of enjoyment" promotes even more strongly a naturalization of *jouissance*: the bodily drives have become our fundamental reality, erratic but indubitable. The message is that we are at home in our bodies and the body is our home; this identification with the drives is a way of conjuring our exile. But the underside of this compulsory enjoyment is a lack of drive or the lethargy of being, which Freud somehow saw as the truth of the psyche's dysfunctional libidinal economy. (Schuster, 126)

SEDUCING REALITY: THE PLEASURE/PAIN OF HYPERREALITY

Jean Baudrillard in his work *Seduction* believed that desire and power was operative in the domain of seduction as "the scared horizon of appearances" (153). For Baudrillard humans were *seduced* (in the original Latin sense, *seducere*, to lead away) by the object of desire. He argued that, in final analysis, a complete understanding of the minutiae of human life is impossible, and when people are seduced into thinking otherwise they become drawn toward a "simulated" version of reality, or, to use one of his neologisms, a state of "hyperreality". This is not to say that the world becomes unreal, but rather that the acceleration and synchronization of hyperindustrial societies displace the natural for the artificial, nature for artifice, and *produce* (construct) our realities rather than relaying a true realistic version of our independent world. Digital capitalism has incorporated the post-structuralist anti-humanist worldview to the point that it bleeds our imaginal and vital lives through a form of seduction to our gadgets, one that replaces reality with artifice in which the data driven economy is slowly moving out into the realm of pure appearances.

It's not that the outer world is a simulation, it is that we simulate the outer world through our seductions as inforgs (Florida: information organisms) who have allowed the free-floating world of the internet to flow through us in a seduction of the Real. We are living in a world in which there no objective reference or neutrality, but always stakes. Even if we seem to be headed for a metastable form of neutrality, the neutral becomes an object of fascination & a challenge may be concealed in it. The logic of our sense baring flesh has been seduced not by sensual pleasure but one of escalating challenges, i.e. the movement from a logic of pleasure to Sadean logic of challenge & death. Death becomes the mandatory resolution of the ritual act of competition & sacrifice. In a hyperreal world we become seduced by the illusionary magic of signs which resonate immediately w/o belief, intent, action, logic or decipherment of utterances or images. Seduction takes sense & turns it from its truth, while psychoanalysis makes depth meaning appear in manifest discourse (appearance). With seduction the charm of appearances invalidates & displaces hidden or unconscious meaning; discourses are seduced by their own signs since they can't end appearances, which turn meaning into another rule of a game.

Seduction cannot be represented since it obliterates the distance between the real and its double. The image is not an "other" but an absorbing surface into which Narcissus looks (not Marcuse's transformed subject or Lacan's subject established in the imaginary); being seduced is what is seductive. The great stories of seduction are stories of incest & end in death. Incestuously seduced by our own image, which consoles us with our death, we gain our power to seduce and be seduced. Everything is seduction not production: production accumulates, orders, regulates, directed to its end, replaces all illusions w/its own as reality principle. Seduction is immoral, superficial, devoted to pleasure, useless, but it is inevitable, inescapable even by the dead. Those that don't wish to seduce or to be seduced are dead (not those that don't produce), and even they return to the void an so exercise seduction as they return to the void. Seduction's secret lies in that something having the time before its completion to make its absence felt.⁶

Today we live in a universe of the play, a simulated world, rather than in one of coherence of objects and their uses. Since the model's precession is absolute, challenges are impossible, since the ability to foresee all possible game (strategies) moves makes stakes impossible. Models, ads and polls, are not objects of investment, but preselected choices; website and TV channel grazing incarnates the ludic as a combinatorial play & fascination. The ludic ≠ fun, but "play" with the networks not to establish alternatives, but to discover optimal functioning. Play reduced to function in education and revolutionary thought (Marcuse) ≠ passion for illusion but as useful. Cybernetic absorption of play into the ludic is more the problem. Flipping, scrolling, texting, the endless repetition of image and eye, the seduction of the screen replaces actual human interaction, the drift of the eye across a oceanic screen of images blocks out reality to the point that we and the image, we and the screen are locked into a new object.

Seduction no longer a passion is now demanded; seduction becomes exchange value, serving circulation, a commodity without an object, a consumer of simulated objects. The seducer was an imposter stripped of control allowing herself to be seduced, one who seeks to please has already succumbed; thus a culture can be based on symbolic equilibrium of seduction. Hypercapitalism

as the seduction of seduction: the game of repetition and death played out in simulated circulation of desire without an object. We are all living in the hyperworld now. The violence (e.g. of sacrifice) trapped in its own artifice has ended along with the universe where everything can be seduced, now the universe is all production, forces, Law, liberation, sexuality as objective function and ultimate finality, a cryptological artifact that has succumbed to its own secret message.

DEATH OF THE LIBERAL SUBJECT

As technoscience, economics, and virtual culture undermine the Enlightenment program we have all been seduced, trapped within the static world of lack imposed by the technocommercium of Capital Autonomization. Stripped of personal experience the Subject of liberal imagination of romantic desire has slipped into the cave of hyperreality. Beginning with the age of cinema humanity was seduced by the moving worlds of images, their bodies glued to the immobile seat lost their solidity as the mind played across a mobile realm of light and shadow. With the seduction of TV the passive and passivating mindlessness and stupidity of the body parked on a couch watching endless hours of sparks across the void became immersed in a realm of fake and canned laughter and technocommercial salvation. With the melding of mind and machinic reality in the gaming worlds of contemporary networks humans have lost their minds and bodies to the virtual pleasures of a seduced and seductive realm of pure image. As the next wave of 3D image systems arrive and cheapen the turnabout world of frozen bodies and moving minds will return to the mobile world of flesh bringing the virtual into appearances. The slow but methodical takeover of naturalized thought has brought desire and pleasure into a commoditized reality that will suck the world of its vital essence.

What has happened according to Stiegler in hyperindustrial society and culture is nothing less than the immersion of reality in simulation: the living present is always re-presented through orthographic (computational/imaging systems) that institute the logic of iteration, or what Stiegler terms the 'montage' of past and present that solicits (seduces) the work of noetic (knowledge-culture: both how to live, and how to think) inheritance (otium). For Stiegler 'tertiary' memory** is reduced to image-consciousness: our experience of the 'how' is that of a series of telematic events that have been synthesized by technological procedures (algorithms), and which, as such, has all but lose the power to provoke the reflexive agency of the self. Thus within the coordinated virtual and informatic systems of what Ross Abbinnett terms the arche-programme, the distinction between primary (intrinsic) and tertiary (extrinsic) memory, which is the place where the *différance* of the individual is given its chance, has become 'absolutely formal and empty'. In other words what is threatened by the media-technoscientific convergence that has taken shape in hyperindustrial democracies is the emergence of a relationship between the 'who' (Subject) of humanity and the 'what' (inhuman core: technics-technology) of technology in which the later constantly seeks to re-engage the former at the level of its basic drives (desire-death), rather than symbolic attachment and reflexive inheritance.⁷

At the heart of the technocapitalist imperative (i.e., neoliberalism) has been the seduction of humanity toward an accelerating horizon of possibility, the immersion and capture of the human in a realm/stratified layer of abstraction where the virtual, informatic, and cybernetic systems of capture (strata) create an integral world to replace the real world – what Deleuze/Guattari term acts of capture, they are like "black holes" or occlusions striving to seize whatever comes within their reach. They operate by coding and territorialization upon the earth; they proceed simultaneously by code and by territoriality*** As Abinnett following Stiegler suggests, what we have reached in our own living present is the point at which technology endangers the contingencies of art, *poiesis* and philosophy that it has put into play: it threatens to stop being the 'transitional object' through which the unity of the symbolic order of society is sustained, and to become instead the condition of living death whereby which each individual is made sick by his or her own repetitive satisfactions (pleasures/jouissance) and impossible desires. (110)

The point for Stiegler is that the hyperindustrial world we live in has co-opted the political spectrum and replaced it with marketing industries, virtual theatres of mediainment that obliterate human community and define us through data driven calculation and algorithmic governmentality. To put it in stark terms the *affective* basis of our collective life is being destroyed and replaced by object attachments that offer no basis for a politics of sacrifice, excess and recognition; our political sensibilities are now informed/formed by artificial selective processes that program us to distrust those 'others' who threaten to take away our already artificially driven belief systems (i.e., freedom to work, consume, and live as we see fit, etc.). As Abinnett paraphrasing Stiegler explains: the descent of aesthetic sensibility into a cybernetic data driven cipher (i.e., Deleuze/Guattari's *dividual/dividuum* – datafied subjects) have produced a Subject whose drives are without mediation, and which is the counterpart of the neoliberal politic-economical agenda that seeks total social control and global domination through markets rather than politics or war.

And, yet, what has happened in Stiegler's opinion is the fulfillment of Nietzsche's Last Man the completed nihilism of humanity whose externalization of knowledge, culture, and mind into its (tertiary) machines has brought the human to its end game in stupidity. As Stiegler puts it:

In the Western industrial world, however, democracy has given way – and has done for quite some time – to consumerism (which is now taking hold in countries that seem to feel little need for democracy). This consumerism is itself based on the liquidation of maturity through the systemic generalization of minority and the industrial dilution of responsibility, or in other words: based on the reign of stupidity [*bêtise*], and of what so often accompanies it, namely cowardice and viciousness. It is this development that

has been internalized by the academic world as simply a fact, with no alternative. (3)9

The politics of fear reigns in our time, hence what is occurring, on a scale and in conditions that were hitherto inconceivable, is the effect of what Gramsci described as a cultural hegemony that de-forms reason – reason understood in Enlightenment terms as that historical and social conquest that now seems to decompose so rapidly into rationalization. Hence the reign of stupidity, baseness (vulgarity) and madness that, disturbing us greatly but preventing us from transforming this inquietude into thinking, instead gives rise to fear, which is a bad counsellor. (ibid., 17) Digital life has been consumed by the market, the consumerist system has become such a desert in which one can no longer believe. Digital consumerism is the reality of and end product of a completed nihilism as the destruction of all values, and it is where the desert grows by destroying the libidinal economy, giving way to drive-based capitalism and industrial populism. Consumerism, after the conservative revolution, has become totally speculative and is systemically destroying all credit and bringing with it the reign of stupidity and madness – which are the ineluctable consequences of 'disembraining'. (144)

In many ways hyperindustrialization is the fruition of German Idealism, the absolute incarnation of absolute idealism. Cut off from the real world, our minds externalized in machinic tertiary systems, our lives mere datapoints or dividuals in a technoutopian vision of transhuman merger with immortal machines. Since the crisis of 2008, which caused this situation of planetary discredit to become general, hyper-financialized consumerism has turned to the immediate necessity of its own self-reproduction. It has tried to do so by fighting to defend its 'positions', but by struggling in this way it is succeeding only in digging its own grave and preparing its self-collapse – induced by the logic of disinvestment that it establishes in every domain. (145) The post-modern reduction of all 'Grand narratives' to the little narratives of 'storytelling', and the postmodern condition, as a narrative of the end of narratives and fables (which could only be one more vast fable), has emerged as a confabulation in the service of a base narrativity – not minor, but in the service of baseness, and constituting a key element of systemic stupidity. (148)

The so called *attention economy* should be termed the dis-economy because it seeks the capture, dissipation, and destruction of human attentiveness – as a result of this diseconomy of attention, it becomes increasingly difficult for schools, businesses, or parents to solicit attention from students, workers, children – attention seems to be exclusively captured and depleted by an industrial apparatus designed essentially for this purpose. (152) As Stiegler relates it,

The development or becoming of the contemporary pharmakon has been placed at the service of the systematic, industrial exploitation of attention. This has occurred through the use of attention capturing psycho-technologies, the advent of which has literally ruined the very possibility of any formation of attention whatsoever. This is a situation of unprecedented gravity, and it is global. And it may well be feared that it is the beginning of a process that we should not hesitate to refer to as decadent. (154)

This implosion into stupidity: the completed nihilism of the end game of human intellect and knowledge has been ongoing for a long while. The externalization of human memory for the purposes of cultural and survival is as old as those first humanoids of the African savannahs discovered in the pages of the Leakey's. For twenty years we have been living through an intense revolution of tertiary retention (i.e., externalized memory in electronic networks) of a previously unknown magnitude. This revolution has undoubtedly been more transformational than that which led, with the advent of printing, to the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Republic of Letters: it changes our entire everyday environment, as well as the conditions in which knowledge is elaborated and transmitted. It changes the ways that life reproduces itself and brings about the possibility that quantum mechanics may be applied to the development of nanomachines. (158) Gilbert Simondon analysed this as a process of disindividuation, yet individuation presupposes this pharmacology, if it is true that technicity in general is pharmacological, and if it is true that the transindividual, that is, meaning and significance in all their forms, is the outcome of this technical exteriorization of the traces of individuation – that is, if it is made possible by tertiary retention in general (161).

The creation of this 'industrial mnemotechnical system' is the result of work that companies such as Google have undertaken to implement publication systems. In the context of this mnemotechnical development, knowledge becomes fundamental to the industrial economy. And today, the extension of the global mnemotechnical system via analogue and digital technologies has led to an unprecedented functional integration of knowledge into the apparatus of production and consumption. (168) The social control of knowledge under the dictates of private interest and enterprise are shaping our worldview and our lives in subtle and ubiquitous ways that we have as yet very little understanding of. An economy that captures and destroys our attentions, that molds and modulates our desires through affective machinic relations, that guides and suggests and makes decisions for us because it knows more about us than we do about ourselves has essentially replaces the human free-will illusion with one that has become a push-button self on steroids.

Stiegler will ask:

How and why has the neoliberal jihad been able to carry on this war, which is clearly being conducted not by one corporation against another, but by shareholders against companies (who can, after the 'financialization' resulting from the 'conservative revolution', remove their boards whenever it suits them), and, through these companies, against the people? And how has all this been carried out in the name of 'democracy', understood above all as free enterprise, and in the name of human rights, understood above all as having abandoned the question of economic rights? (169)

The answer he gives is not one many academics will want to hear: this could happen only because academics have given up

thinking the pharmakon in its positivity – and hence have given up any critique of the legacy of idealist and materialist dialectics. Only capitalist industry, and especially, more recently, the financial industry, has succeeded in taking advantage of the positivity of the pharmakon that is tertiary retention, that is, technics in all its forms, and digital technology in particular. (170)

So is there a way out? Can we reverse these processes? Are we condemned to the power of seduction that is accelerating us into a fully automatized and atomized world of blips and bits and integrated algorithmically governed individuals rather than independent and free-willed humans? Is the liberal subject truly a myth, a figment of Enlightenment prejudice and thought? Have we lost our minds? Socrates was put to death in another conforming society of elites who sought to control the minds of its children, a society that would condemn its philosopher for opposing the sophist tendencies precisely by referring to 'thinking for oneself'. The sophists of our era are the Googles of the world that offer and suggest and cajole you with Big Data driven systems of machinic/artificial intelligence that would replace 'thinking for oneself' with superintelligent agents who know us better than we know ourselves.

I'll delve into some of the ways we might either resist or re-imagine such a future in which technology is human driven rather than data driven, a world in which the technicity of human/technology works in dialectical and reciprocal relations of mutual advantage rather than under the sign of markets. Is this, too, wishful thinking? We will see...

* Pharmakon: Pharmakon, in philosophy and critical theory, is a composite of three meanings: remedy, poison, and scapegoat.[1] The first and second senses refer to the everyday meaning of pharmacology (and to its sub-field, toxicology), deriving from the Greek source term *φάρμακον* (phármakon), denoting any drug, while the third sense refers to the pharmakos ritual of human sacrifice. (Wiki) In recent philosophical work, the term centers on Jacques Derrida's "Plato's Pharmacy", and the notion that writing is a pharmakon. Whereas a straightforward view on Plato's treatment of writing (in Phaedrus) suggests that writing is to be rejected as strictly poisonous to the ability to think for oneself in dialogue with others (i.e. to anamnesis), Bernard Stiegler argues that "the hypomnesic appears as that which constitutes the condition of the anamnestic" –in other words, externalised time-bound inscription/memory systems of communication is necessary for original creative thought, in part because it is the primordial support of culture. (see: Stiegler, Bernard (2010). What makes life worth living: On pharmacology. Cambridge, UK: Polity. p. 19.)

** For Stiegler both of these forms of retention are distinct from tertiary memory which includes recorded (i.e., externalized in artifacts, writing, computers, etc.) memories such as pictures (which Husserl calls image-consciousness). Stiegler argues tertiary memory is constitutive of primary and secondary memory and not derivative from them. His point is that in the gramophone record, and more generally in the recorded temporal object, it is not perception which makes possible memory and the artefact but the artefact that makes possible both primary and secondary retention: the record allows both the perception of the melody and, crucially, the constant modification of that perception through repeated auditions.

***In their chapter on the Geology of Morals Deleuze/Guattari tell us,

The same Professor Challenger who made the Earth scream with his pain machine, as described by Arthur Conan Doyle, gave a lecture after mixing several textbooks on geology and biology in a fashion befitting his simian disposition. He explained that the Earth – the Deterritorialized, the Glacial, the giant Molecule – is a body without organs. This body without organs is permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles. That, however, was not the question at hand. For there simultaneously occurs upon the earth a very important, inevitable phenomenon that is beneficial in many respects and unfortunate in many others: stratification. Strata are Layers, Belts. They consist of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy, of producing upon the body of the earth molecules large and small and organizing them into molar aggregates. Strata are acts of capture, they are like "black holes" or occlusions striving to seize whatever comes within their reach. They operate by coding and territorialization upon the earth; they proceed simultaneously by code and by territoriality. The strata are judgments of God; stratification in general is the entire system of the judgment of God (but the earth, or the body without organs, constantly eludes that judgment, flees and becomes destratified, decoded, deterritorialized).⁸

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